

The 86th Texas Legislature finds that children who are deaf or hard of hearing (DHH) and Deafblind (DB) are often at risk for language delay or deprivation. The purpose of House Bill (HB) 548 is to generate and monitor data on the language acquisition of children eight years of age or younger who are deaf or hard of hearing.

For additional questions on HB 548, please email the Special Education Language Acquisition (SELA) mailbox at SELA@tea.texas.gov.

Consent

1. What if families do not give consent for testing? UPDATED August 6, 2021

Parent consent is required to conduct the assessment. If families do not provide consent, then the local education agency (LEA) will indicate this in the Texas Student Data System (TSDS) SELA core collection by selecting “Not Assessed for (E1668) Assessment Reporting Category.”

LEAs must obtain annual consent from families to conduct assessments for HB 548.

2. If a family does not consent to test, will that negatively impact the assessment LEAs conduct for writing their present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAPF) statements?

No, if a family does not consent to test for HB 548, that has no impact on the annual assessment for special education services or developing individualized education program (IEP) goals and PLAAPF statements. An LEA may use the same assessments and tools for the full and individual evaluation (FIE) and HB 548, but the consent for testing is separate and is not contingent on one another.

Assessment

3. Will DHH students on Section 504 plans need to be assessed?

Students served under Section 504 plans will not be assessed as part of this data collection. Any time there are concerns about a child's progress, there should be discussions with the educational team about whether assessment data is needed for decision making. Section 504 committees may choose to test with one or more SELA approved assessments, but results will not be collected for HB 548.

4. What assessments or tools should be used?

A panel of experts in language acquisition and deaf education determined the appropriate language acquisition assessments and tools to be used for data collection. The list of approved assessments and tools can be found on the TEA Sensory Impairment webpage. The list will be reviewed annually by the panel and updated as needed.

5. Can we use assessments and tools that are not on the approved list for HB 548 language acquisition? UPDATED August 1, 2022

No, because HB 548 states, “(b)... language acquisition of each child eight years of age or younger who is deaf or hard of hearing is regularly assessed using a tool or assessment determined to be valid and reliable

as provided by Subsection (d)."

Subsection (d) (2) states that “the determination, in consultation with those experts, of the tools and assessments that are valid and reliable, in both content and administration, for use in assessing the language acquisition of children eight years of age or younger who are deaf or hard of hearing.” Therefore, only the approved assessments are to be used for data collection under HB 548. Currently, there are only two categories of assessments that are approved to report for SELA core collection:

- Diagnostic
- Proficiency

6. How do you define “specific language acquisition services?” UPDATED August 6, 2021

HB 548 defines language acquisition as: “(3) "Language acquisition" includes expressive and receptive language acquisition and literacy development in English, American Sign Language, or both, or, if applicable, in another language primarily used by a child’s parent or guardian and is separate from any modality used to communicate in the applicable language or languages.”

TSDS SELA core collection includes the following reporting options for specific language acquisition services (E1662):

- Direct
- Indirect/Consultative

More than one option can be reported for each student.

7. What components should be assessed for HB 548 language acquisition? UPDATED August 1, 2022

The two main components of language acquisition are receptive and expressive communication in English and American Sign Language (ASL). The areas to assess for each component are outlined below:

Receptive Communication	Expressive Communication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic concepts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic concepts

8. Who shall conduct the evaluations for HB 548 language acquisition? UPDATED August 1, 2022

Professionals who are providing language acquisition services, such as the teacher of students who are DHH or DB, the speech-language pathologist (SLP), the diagnostician, the licensed specialist in school psychology (LSSP), or an ASL specialist, will conduct the assessments as a team. Each assessment and tool specify which credentials a professional must have to administer it. Please refer to the “HB 548 Language Acquisition Assessments” document on the TEA Sensory Impairment webpage for more specific information on who is qualified to administer an assessment and tool.

For students who are 0-2 of age, and families are receiving services with Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) in conjunction with the Regional Day School Program for the Deaf (RDSPD), the teacher of students who are DHH or DB will conduct the assessments and report the results to the LEA.

9. Can we use FIE results instead of conducting additional evaluations?

If the FIE was completed during the current school year and the assessments and tools are one of the

approved assessments and tools for HB 548, then the LEA can use the FIE results. However, families must give consent to assess for HB 548 language acquisition.

10. How frequently should we assess students? UDPATED August 1, 2022

HB 548 requires students to be assessed annually to assist in monitoring language acquisition skills over time. A minimum of one assessment is recommended being administered each year for the requirements of HB 548 language acquisition and to obtain a global picture of the student's language acquisition in receptive and expressive communication. LEAs are only allowed to report one score for either category (diagnostic or proficiency) for the SELA core collection for each student. It is possible for an LEA to report one score in the diagnostic category and another score in the proficiency category, however, only one score is to be reported for each student when compiling results for the annual report.

11. If a student turns 9 during the school year, do they still get assessed? UDPATED August 1, 2022

Every student who is DHH or DB and 8 years of age or younger on September 1st will be assessed for HB 548 language acquisition.

12. If we receive a new student in April, does this student still need to be assessed? UPDATED August 6, 2021

Yes, the student will need to be assessed and the last day to finalize and submit completed data for HB 548 in the SELA core collection is by the fourth Thursday of June.

If a student is a transfer from out of state, LEAs will have until the third Monday of May to obtain consent, administer the assessments or tools, and by the fourth Thursday of June report the data in TSDS SELA core collection. LEAs should complete this in good faith.

If a student is a transfer from another LEA in Texas, the receiving LEA should reach out to the previous LEA and confirm if they have completed and reported SELA core collection data.

- If the previous LEA has reported the data, then the receiving LEA does not need to report the data for the school year.
- If the previous LEA has not assessed and reported the data yet, then the receiving LEA will need to obtain consent, assess, and report for the current school year.
- If the previous LEA has already assessed but has not reported the data, then it is the responsibility of the previous LEA to report the data for that student.

Each student will be assigned a unique ID number for tracking purposes and to minimize duplication, especially in a situation where the student moves in the middle of the year.

13. If a student is bilingual and the LEA administers an assessment or tool in both languages, which score shall be reported? UPDATED August 1, 2022

For the purpose of TSDS SELA core collection, LEAs are to report the highest score for the specific category of assessment given (diagnostic or proficiency).

14. How does TSDS SELA core collection define "eligibility effective date"? UPDATED August 1, 2022

ELIGIBILITY-DATE (E1723) is defined as the date upon which a student who is DHH or DB is eligible for services. For SELA core collection, this date is when an LEA identifies that a student who is DHH or DB is eligible and enrolled for services. This date may be outside of the current school year.

ELIGIBILITY-DATE is currently only used by the SELA core collection, which is for students who are 8 years or younger on September 1 of the school year and who have one of the following values for DISABILITY (E1220):

- Deaf-Blindness (Deaf-Blind)
- Deaf or Hard of Hearing (Auditory Impairment)

Assessment Results

15. Where will the results be posted? UPDATED August 1, 2022

An annual report that includes the data will be posted no later than August 31 of each year on the TEA website under the tab “Reports and Data.” The annual report will be listed under “Reports to Current Legislature.” A link to the report will be shared with the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Texas School for the Deaf (TSD) for posting on their respective websites.

The report will include general statewide findings on DHH and DB students’ progress in language acquisition and potential recommendations for timely intervention.

16. How will the results be used?

HB 548 encourages families to have open and ongoing communication about their child’s language acquisition with their LEA. The SELA core collection data will allow for tracking growth and to determine the need for timely interventions and possible changes to the individualized family service plan (IFSP) or IEP. The data will not be used for accountability purposes.